

22 December 1954

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FOREWORD

DDCI Statement on NSC Guidance of Covert Operations.

(Excerpt from Statement of DDCI at the Bureau of the Budget Hearing, 27 October 1954. This Statement, quoted verbatim, was given by DDCI in response to direct question by the Bureau of the Budget. It is not technically a directive. It is an official statement by CIA of the theory of the legal relationship between CIA and the NSC in NSC 5412 matters. It is cited here as a brief definition of a general concept with which the development and use of the Covert Operations portion of this Policy Book must conform.)

a. Primary direction is furnished CIA by NSC. The basic directive to the DCI to conduct covert operations is NSC 5412. That paper states in effect that such operations will be used to support U. S. foreign and military policies, subject to the requirement that they be consistent with such foreign and military policies and that they be possible within the limitations of the "plausible disclaimer" clause.

b. The U. S. policy objectives, which covert operations will serve, are not established exclusively and separately for covert operations. They are the objectives which are established for the U. S. Government as a whole by the continuing flow of substantive NSC policy papers. These papers constitute meaningful guidance for CIA covert operations because they establish the purposes toward which covert operations, as directed under NSC 5412, are to be pointed.

c. While these papers have substantial meaning and value for CIA by themselves, three important factors greatly amplify their application:

(1) Where the NSC itself wishes to give special emphasis to the employment of covert operations for an expressed policy objective, terms such as "special political operations" or "psychological operations" are used in the NSC papers to give such emphasis, and CIA so understands the use of such terms.

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(2) CIA participation in the NSC Planning Board process develops a legislative history type of understanding on matters which may not be specifically stated in the text of the paper itself. Such understandings may clarify either the policy objectives themselves or the role of covert operations.

(3) Through constant liaison with State and Defense and our participation in the OCB mechanism, CIA keeps informed of their amplification of NSC policy and develops its covert programs accordingly, coordinating its specific operations if there is doubt whether the proposed operation is consistent with the policy.

d. In relation to these substantive NSC policy papers, the internal CIA action is as follows: Through the medium of a policy book, we identify, for planning purposes, those covert operational tasks which appear to be necessary to contribute the CIA share to the accomplishment of such policy. These tentatively stated tasks are examined and refined for feasibility, capability, and profitability. Those which survive these tests are developed into proposed operational projects which require the Director's approval before they can be undertaken. If, at this project stage with all of the detail of the matter in view, the proposed operation is fully consistent with established U.S. policy objectives, the Director has the authority and responsibility, under NSC 5412, to approve the action. If there is question whether the project, as developed, is consistent with established U.S. policy objectives, the overt U.S. agency which is concerned with such policy, or the OCB, is consulted for advice and the proposed project is abandoned if found not to conform.

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